POP CULTURE MEETS HORROR

WAKEUPZUZ

LIMITED HORROR ISSUE!

FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY!

A GREAT CHAOS
Ken Caron's Grusesome New Aesthetic

KANYE'S TWISTED FANTASY
His Banned Music Video

KING OF THE FANGED
Carti's Relationship With Horror Films

QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
The legacy of Aaliyah's dark, final role

ETERNAL ATAKE
The Suicide Cult That Inspired Lil Uzi's Magnum Opus

SATANIC PANIC
The Allure of Satanism in Music

$0.00 October 2025
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 **BJÖRK'S STALKER**
Obsession turned deadly

2 **SATANIC PANIC**
The Allure of Satanism in Music

3 **KANYE'S TWISTED FANTASY**
Revisitng His Banned Horror Flick

4 **GOBLIN ALBUM QUIZ**
How well do you know Tyler's horrorcore record?

5 **DAYS BEFORE RODEO**
The Unintentional Horror Soundtrack by Travis

6 **A GREAT CHAOS**
Ken Caron's Grusesome new aesthetic

7 **DARK FEMININE**
Doja Cat's connection with Carrie

8 **QUEEN OF THE DAMNED**
The legacy of Aaliyah's dark, final role

9 **CREEPSHOW**
5 creepy music videos for you to watch

11 **ETERNAL ATAKE**
Lil Uzi Vert's twisted inspiration behind his Magnum Opus

12 **KING OF THE FANGED**
How Vampire Films served as a muse for Playboi Carti

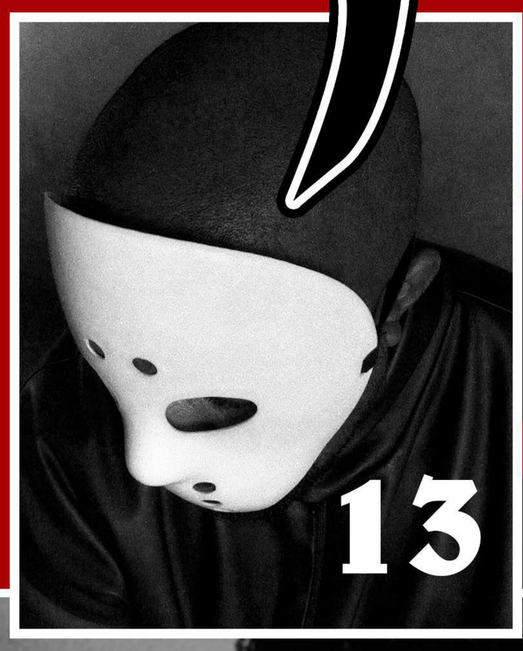
13 **JASON: BEHIND THE MASK**
How Jason's Hockey mask found its way into Hip-Hop

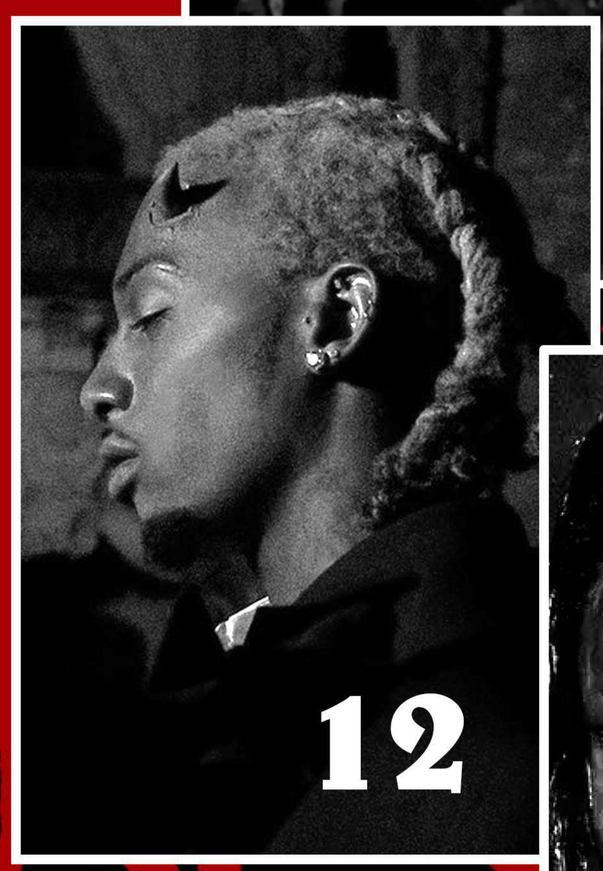
15 **THE STORY OF THRILLER**
How Michael Jackson's Thriller changed the music industry forever

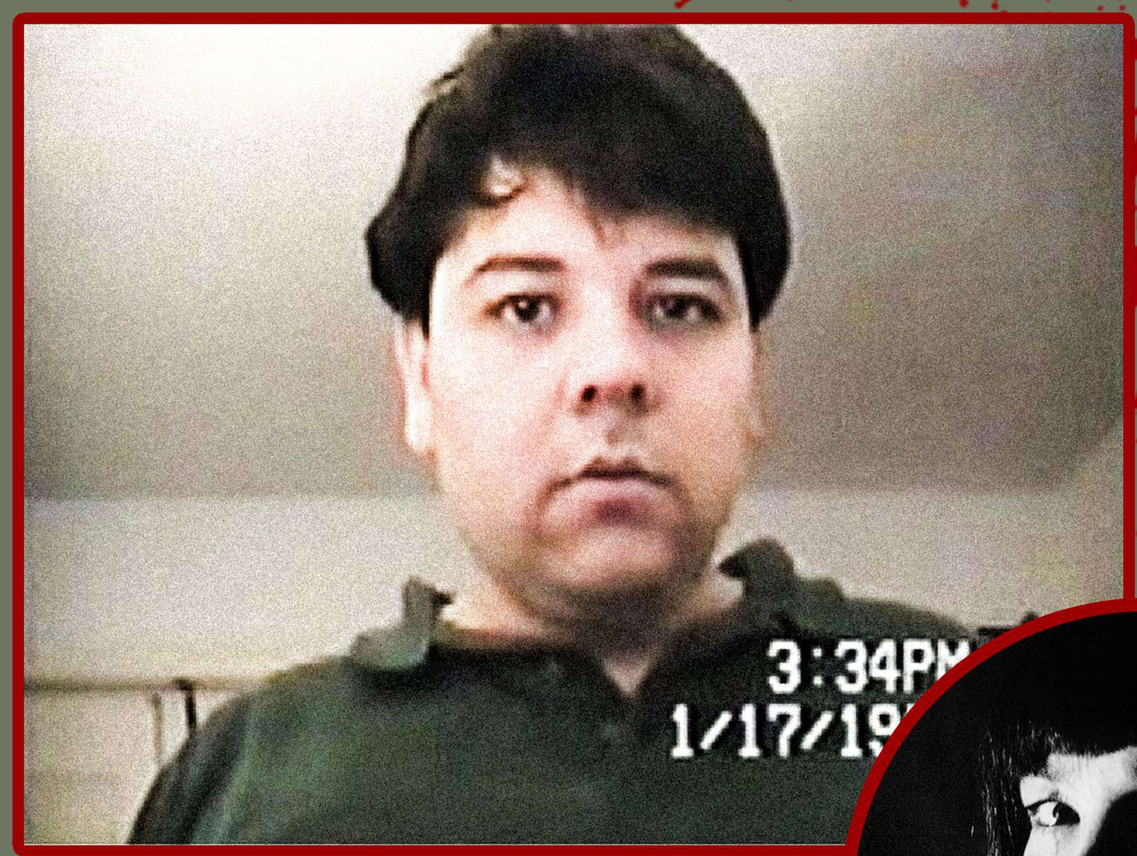
17 **THE ORIGINS OF HORRROCORE**
Tracing the origins of Hip-Hop's Dark Side

18 **GUESS THE BAR...**
Can you guess who said the horror-themed bar?

19 **EXIT TICKET**
6 films to watch before you go







BJÖRK'S STÄLKER

Obsession Turned *Deadly*: The Stalker Who Couldn't Let Go

Navigating fan relationships can be treacherous for global stars. Some artists embrace their supporters, feeling they owe their success to them, while others maintain distance to protect their privacy. Yet, no matter the approach, there are always fans who become dangerously obsessed, leading to situations where harm is not just a possibility but a tragic reality. This chilling story involves Icelandic pop icon Björk and her stalker, Ricardo López, who became so consumed by his fixation that he ultimately tried to take her life.

Born in 1975 in Montevideo, Uruguay, Ricardo López grew up in a seemingly stable family but remained introverted and isolated. A failed artistic career and feelings of inferiority led him to retreat into the world of celebrity. By 1993, López's obsession with Björk had blossomed. He viewed her as his muse, writing fervently in a diary that eventually filled 803 pages. His infatuation shifted from admiration to a dangerous fixation, where he even fantasized about befriending her as a child, disconnected from any sexual desire. When he discovered Björk was romantically involved with English musician Goldie in 1996, his delusions took a dark turn. Feeling betrayed and enraged, López abandoned his diary and turned to video, documenting his spiraling obsession and plotting revenge against Björk.

> "I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING."
>
> - Ricardo López

On September 12, 1996, López recorded his final video diary entry, revealing his plans to send a letter bomb—a package containing sulfuric acid concealed within a hollowed-out book. As he prepared to mail the bomb, he exhibited a disturbing calmness, stating, "I am completely not depressed. I know exactly what I am doing." After sending the package, he completed his grim ritual by shaving his head and painting his face in unsettling colors, then fatally shot himself, declaring "Victory!" as his final act. Four days later, authorities discovered his decomposing body, prompting an urgent warning to Björk and the interception of the bomb en route to her London home.

In the aftermath, Björk expressed her horror and sadness over the incident. She described the event as "terrible," urging fans to respect her privacy and personal life. In an interview a year later, she admitted that the whole experience left her shaken, saying, "I couldn't sleep for a week... and I'd be lying if I said it didn't scare the fuck out of me." Unbeknownst to López, Björk had recently ended her relationship with Goldie, highlighting the tragic irony of his misguided obsession.

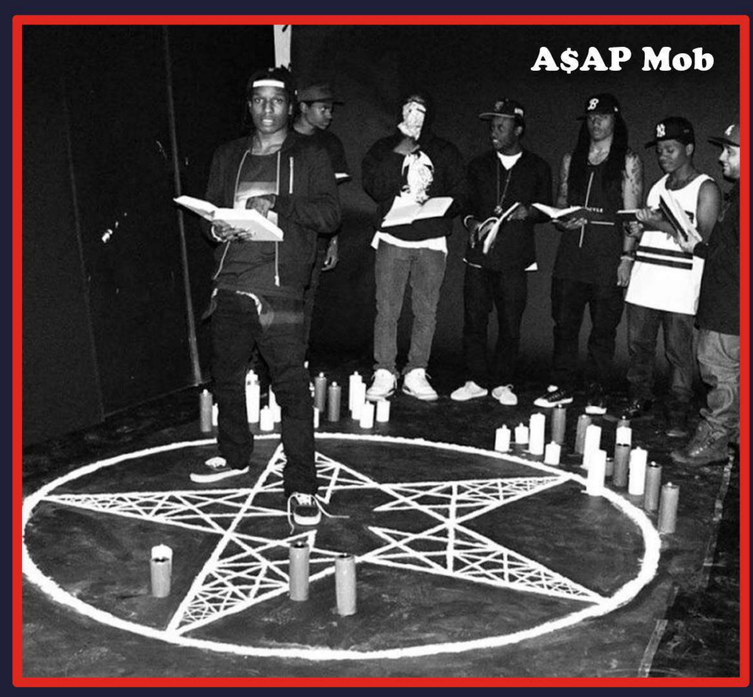
This haunting tale serves as a stark reminder of the perilous boundaries that can blur between fame and obsession. While many fans admire from a distance, some feel entitled to intrude upon the lives of those they idolize. For anyone in the public eye, the story of Björk and her stalker is a cautionary horror tale, a testament to the chilling reality that fame can attract those who are dangerously unstable. ★

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**

SATANIC PANIC

Exploring the Enduring Allure of Satanism in Music

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**



Shock value is a timeless marketing tool, and few themes provoke a reaction quite like Satanism in music. Over a century ago, Jelly Roll Morton faced the wrath of his grandmother for playing what she deemed “the Devil’s music.” In 1920s America, jazz was labeled as dangerous—associated with brothels and drinking dens. As Morton recalled, “When my grandmother found out that I was playing jazz in one of the sporting houses, she told me that I had disgraced the family and forbade me to live at the house… She told me that Devil music would surely bring about my downfall, but I just couldn’t put it behind me.” This narrative of music being in league with the dark arts extends far beyond jazz, echoing through the ages and permeating rock’n’roll, heavy metal, and hip-hop.

The influence of Satan on music is most prominently linked to rock and heavy metal, with bands like Black Sabbath, Slayer, Marilyn Manson, and Iron Maiden leading the charge. Black Sabbath, in particular, played a pivotal role in infusing dark, occult imagery into mainstream rock. Their portrayal of Satan as a metaphor for societal evils, coupled with unsettling “Satanic chords”—most notably the dissonant flattened fifth known as the "Diabolus in Musica"—created an eerie atmosphere that blurred the lines between shock value and genuine engagement with the occult. This combination not only incited moral panic but also cemented their status in music history, setting the stage for future bands to explore similar dark themes. Marilyn Manson’s provocative album Antichrist Superstar and his claims of endorsement from Anton LaVey only solidified the connection. The band HIM further leaned into Satanic aesthetics, embracing the number "666" and their signature heartagram, a symbol of the juxtaposition of softness and hardness, ultimately clarifying that their themes were more symbolic than sincere worship.

In hip-hop, Satanic imagery takes on its own unique twist. In 1993, Big L's promotional single "Devil's Son" faced radio bans due to its controversial lyrical content. DJ Paul of Three 6 Mafia echoed this sentiment, asserting, "There's no Three 6 without Satan. We were into horror movies and serial killers. It's more like a character I'd say." However, Tyler, the Creator escalated this portrayal even further. The Odd Future collective, emerging in the early 2010s, was quickly branded as devil-worshipping misfits, their merchandise featuring symbols like inverted crosses and references to Satan throughout Tyler's debut album, Goblin. Reflecting on his upbringing, Tyler stated, "My grandmother once told me I was from hell since I was so evil. I kinda took that and flipped it." In more recent years, Lil Uzi Vert embraced inverted crosses and devil horns as part of his persona, even leading some critics to draw connections between his name and the word "Lucifer." Meanwhile, Playboi Carti's adoption of Satanic symbolism, including tattoos of upside-down crosses and references to his Opium Collective, adds another layer to this ongoing dialogue.

The panic surrounding these themes often stems from a misunderstanding of the artists' intentions. Many musicians utilize Satanic imagery as a form of shock, not as a genuine expression of belief. Black Sabbath's Geezer Butler articulated this well: "We wanted to inject some reality into music," suggesting that their darker themes responded to a largely Christian society grappling with the concepts of good and evil. Similarly, Bruce from Iron Maiden explained that their provocative imagery was reminiscent of early horror films designed to engage audiences. “So they actually had Dracula, blood, fangs, sex, the devil—all this stuff was, like, 'Oh my God. That is so shocking,' but it really kind of turns us on in secret." In hip-hop, Lil Uzi recognizes that not everyone appreciates his use of Satanic themes, admitting, “if they don’t like it, they have the option to turn it off.” Despite his darker aesthetic, Playboi Carti attributes his success to God, illustrating that many artists may embrace Satanic imagery more for its aesthetic appeal than a true commitment to those beliefs.

Ultimately, artists often adopt these darker aesthetics to give you a little scare. The way audiences react to Satanic imagery ensures its persistence in music. Each new wave of creativity redefines shock, keeping the narrative alive and compelling. As the music world continues to evolve, the question remains: will these artists go to hell for their theatrics? Neither you nor I can decide.

Kanye's Twisted Fantasy

Revisiting Kanye West's Banned 'Monster' Video and the Chaos It Unleashed

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**

Kanye West has always pushed boundaries in every creative venture, from his bold moves in fashion to his innovative music. However, critics believe he crossed a line with the release of his horror-inspired music video for "Monster." The video stirred a storm of controversy and, for many, went too far in its unsettling depictions.

The song itself is often described as a horrorcore track, an unusual direction for both Kanye and Jay-Z. While Jay-Z's verse was widely panned for its lackluster performance, Nicki Minaj's animated contribution—featuring her evil alter ego Roman Zolanski—stood out and received praise. The dark and atmospheric production of "Monster" is minimalistic, often featuring little more than eerie screams and rough percussion, creating a haunting soundscape that pairs perfectly with the unsettling video. Upon its release, the video came with a disclaimer: "the following content is in no way to be interpreted as misogynistic or negative towards any groups of people. It is an art piece and shall be taken as such." However, the warning wasn't enough to quell the backlash. Drawing inspiration from horror films and gothic aesthetics, the video includes nods to *Thriller*, *American Psycho*, and *Saw*, while also referencing infamous haunted

painting *The Hands Resist Him*. In one notable scene, Kanye is shown struggling to hold a door shut as monsters try to break in. Throughout the video, Kanye and his collaborators are seen rapping alongside scantily clad, seemingly dead women, with more corpses hanging by chains from the ceiling. Nicki Minaj's alter ego Roman Zolanski kidnaps her other persona, Barbie, in a playful yet sinister performance that highlights her verse.

The video was quickly condemned for being misogynistic and racist, particularly in its portrayal of white women as lifeless objects Ta-Nehisi Coates of *The Atlantic* questioned what the reaction would have been if John Mayer had created a video featuring dead Black women and accused Kanye of sexism and racism. Daphne Bramham of the *Vancouver Sun* echoed these concerns, questioning the entertainment value of women hanging in lingerie. In response to the backlash, the video was banned from MTV and removed from Kanye's official YouTube channel. Still, for those curious, the controversial video remains accessible on YouTube today, circulating on various unofficial uploads.

Personally, I don't believe Kanye intended to be misogynistic, though I can understand why some interpreted the video that way. As for accusations of racism, I find them somewhat baseless—would it have been less problematic if Black women were in the same roles? The concept was simply too extreme for many to handle at the time. It raises the question of how differently Kanye's Twisted Fantasy might have been received in today's landscape. ★

how well do you know goblin?

See if you can tell which song each lyric belongs to! Give yourself one point for every correct answer! Good luck!

start

1. Baby, you're gorgeous, I just wanna drag your lifeless body to the forest...
A. "Analog"
B. "She"
C. "Window"

2. Kill people, burn shit, fuck school...
A. "Radicals"
B. "Sandwitches"
C. "Nightmare"

3. Here's the number to therapist, you tell him all your problems, he's fuckin' awesome with listenin...
A. "AU79"
B. "Golden"
C. "Yonkers"

4. I'm not a fucking role model, I'm a 19 year old fucking emo-tional coaster with pipe dreams...
A. "Bitch Suck Dick"
B. "She"
C. "Goblin"

5. Oh, this Bathing Ape cape? Bitch, I got it for a bargain at the neighborhood Target...
A. "Transylvania"
B. "Nightmare"
C. "Steak Sauce"

6. Don't know what to think, 'cause last time I attempted this shit the judge ordered me to see a shrink...
A. "Golden"
B. "Fish"
C. "Untitled 63"

7. Who the fuck invited Mr. I Don't Give a fuck who cries about his daddy in a blog because his music sucks?
A. "Sandwitches"
B. "She"
C. "Yonkers"

Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. C 4. C 5. A 6. B 7. A

the verdict

Add one point for every correct answer you go and find out the verdict below.

0-3 Points **listen more**

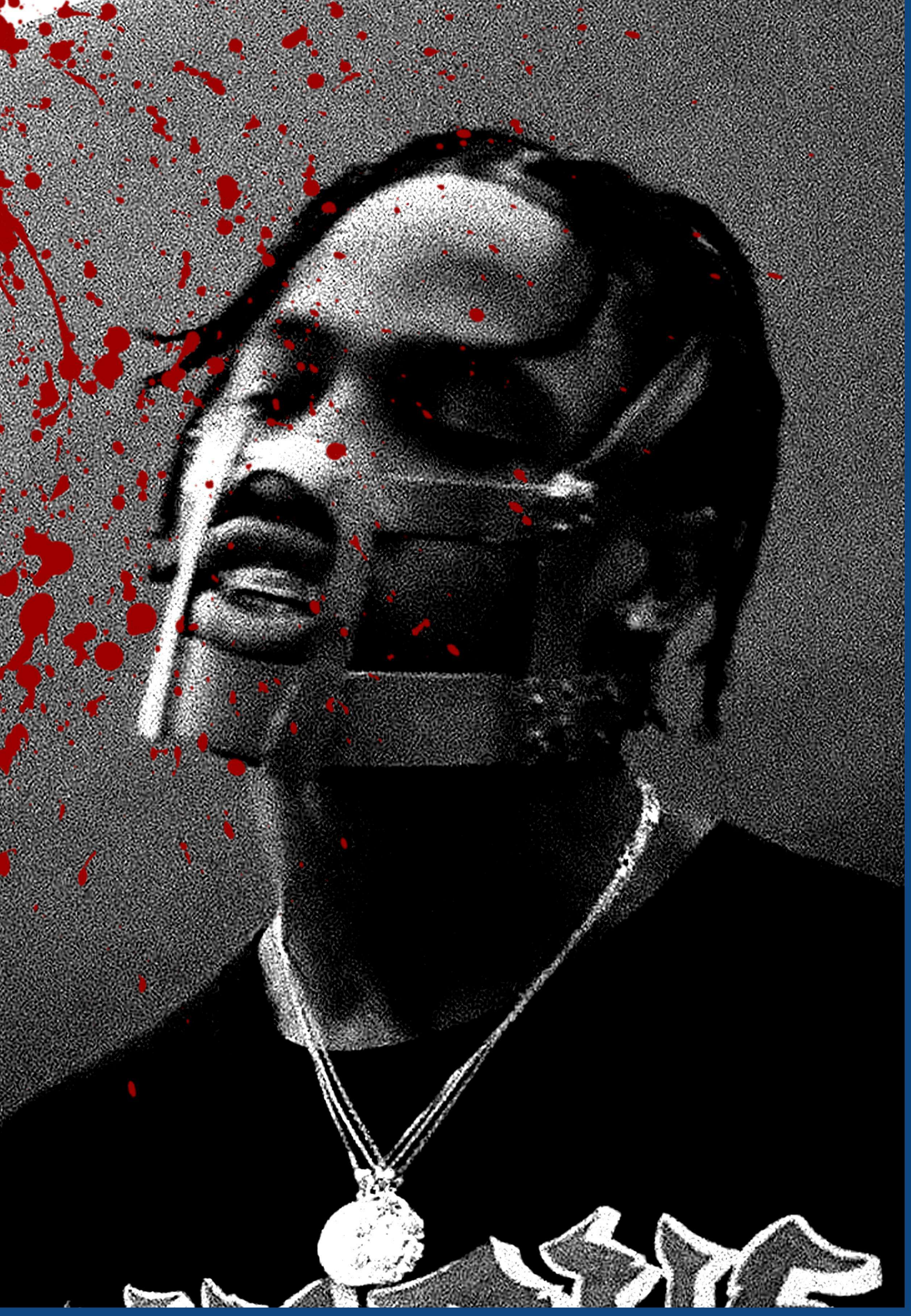
You seem to like Wolf Haley enough to take this test, but not enough to be considered a fan. Keep the CD on repeat until you know every word to every single song!

4-5 Points **loyal listener**

You are pretty on point when it comes to Wolf's lyrics, but you still have a few listens to go until you're able to sing-along without any moments of blanking.

6-7 Points **listening 24/7**

There's no denying that you will be the one helping out Wolf if he forgets a lyric on stage! You are definitely Wolf Haley's #1 Fan!



DAYS BEFORE RODEO:

An Unintentional Horror Soundtrack

How Travis Scott's mixtape conjures an eerie atmosphere perfect for the spooky season.

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY ZUZI

Released for free on August 18, 2014, Days Before Rodeo marks the second mixtape from American rapper Travis Scott, serving as a prequel to his debut album Rodeo. Although it primarily aims to showcase Scott's ambition and hunger for success, the project inadvertently captures the haunting essence of Halloween. From its unsettling artwork to its spine-chilling tracks, Days Before Rodeo emerges as a perfect soundtrack for the spooky season, demonstrating how hip-hop can draw inspiration from horror themes and atmospheres.

The cover art alone sets the tone, mimicking the bold, fuzzy designs of classic 80s horror films. Its minimalistic yet striking appearance hints at the dark, eerie vibes contained within. The mixtape opens with "The Prayer," where Scott samples music from the horror classic Candyman, immersing listeners in a distinctly unsettling ambiance. Producer Wondagurl speeds up the sample, transforming the original score into a sinister, hyperspeed funeral dirge. Scott's lyrical delivery, laden with menacing undertones, solidifies his position as a lurking threat, as he ominously declares, "Man, I might fuck 'round, lose my mind, I gotta break out/I'm on a stake out, on a farm or your lake house."

The horror elements continue to flourish in the second track, "Mamacita." The eerie, airy sample loops in the background, heightening the tension with chilling speaker-knocking drums and a sinister piano that creeps into the mix. The distorted bass, kicks, and pitched snares create an atmosphere so tense that it practically demands a Halloween playlist. This unsettling energy permeates the mixtape, particularly in tracks five through seven, where Scott fully embraces the darker themes.

In "Don't Play," Scott warns his competition with a deep, eerie voice layered over a creepy piano melody, intensifying the track's menacing vibe. The sinister production leaves listeners with an unsettling sensation that crescendos into the following track, "Skyfall." Here, Travis channels his inner horror mastermind, as he instructs producer Metro Boomin to emulate the "perfect evil melody" found in Chief Keef's "Don't Like." The result is one of the mixtape's most sinister offerings, where Travis hums a ghostly melody, wrapping the track in an unsettling shroud. "I'm trapped in my conscious," he raps, further deepening the eerie atmosphere.

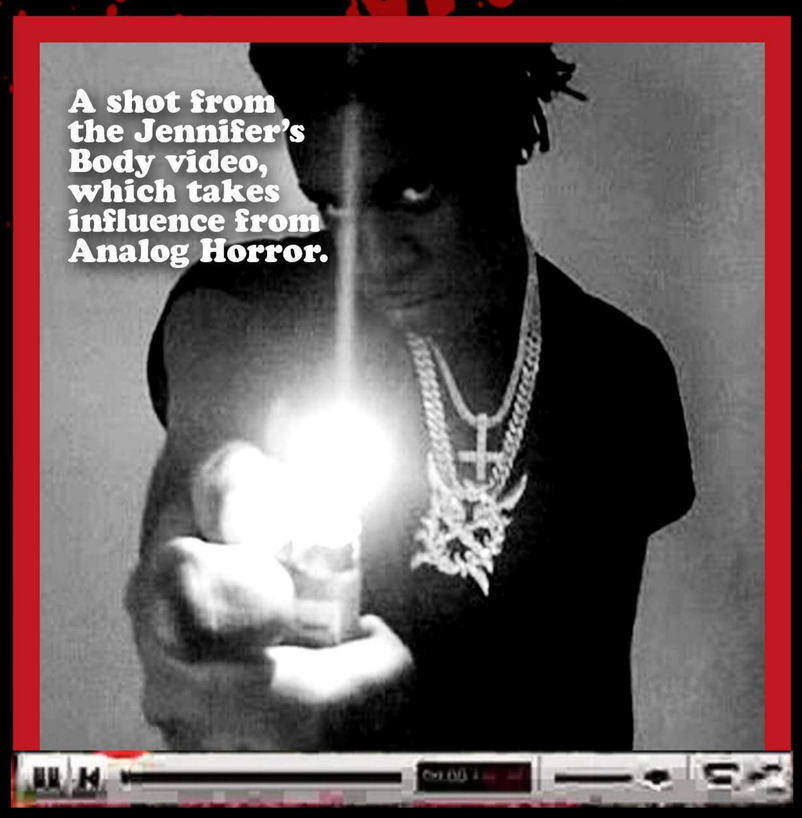
The ultimate Halloween anthem on the mixtape has to be "Zombies," which leans heavily into its horror themes. The track opens with Travis declaring, "And the kids sing…" as the production begins to swell. Some fans speculate that he intentionally mumbles "killed," creating a haunting homophone with the song title. The chorus features a layered vocal performance, resembling a zombie mob, urging them to sing louder. Lines like, "We will understand if they don't (Yeah, louder, yeah)" and "We don't want they bullshit no more (Yell louder, yeah)" evoke the chilling imagery of a relentless horde.

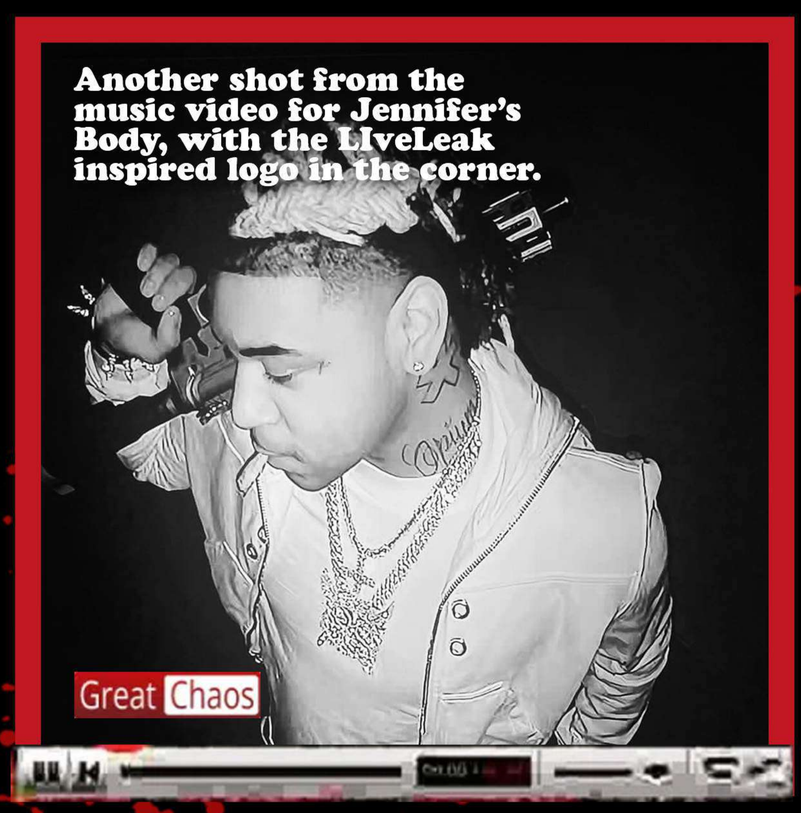
In a genre often dominated by bravado and glamour, Days Before Rodeo offers a unique perspective by drawing on horror motifs, creating an album that is not only a showcase of Travis Scott's talent but also an atmospheric journey perfect for Halloween. Whether you're hosting a spooky gathering or simply craving a soundtrack to evoke some chills, this mixtape stands out as a captivating blend of hip-hop and horror, proving that the scariest tales can often be found in unexpected places. So, if you're looking for a hauntingly good time this Halloween, look no further than Travis Scott's Days Before Rodeo. ★

A GREAT CHAOS

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**

How the Internet's Dark Side Inspired Ken Carson's Gruesome Aesthetic





The mid-2000s to late 2010s marked the rise of the internet as a platform for more than just communication—it became a breeding ground for horror. As online culture grew, so did the subgenres of digital horror, from Creepypastas to Analog Horror, chain emails to shock sites. The horror found on the early internet often had a raw, disturbing edge, with sites like LiveLeak at the forefront, offering unfiltered glimpses of real-life violence and terror. These digital spaces created an unsettling blend of fiction and reality, desensitizing users to extreme content while leaving a lasting impact on online culture.

One of the most notorious examples of this was LiveLeak, a shock site that gained infamy in 2007 after hosting the leaked footage of Saddam Hussein's execution. Known for its unapologetic and raw approach to gore and real-world violence, LiveLeak became synonymous with the darkest corners of the internet. Co-founder Hayden Hewitt famously defended the platform's choice to host such content, stating, "Look, all this is happening, this is real life, and this is going on, and we're going to have to show it." From the beheading of U.S. journalist James Foley to countless other acts of violence, LiveLeak became a hub of real-world horror that seeped into the consciousness of those who ventured into its unsettling archives.

Although the site officially shut down in 2021, its influence didn't die. In 2023, rapper Ken Carson drew heavy inspiration from LiveLeak and other early internet horror aesthetics during the rollout for his album A Great Chaos. Carson's alt Instagram account featured shocking, grotesque imagery reminiscent of the gore-filled days of LiveLeak—low-quality, bloody images of dead bodies that recalled the gritty feel of old internet shock sites. One particular post depicted a shooting, with the perpetrator donning a mask inspired by the Mordegard Glesgorv Creepypasta, another chilling piece of internet lore.

As the album release approached, Carson took things further by unveiling his album logo, a direct reference to the infamous LiveLeak logo, symbolizing the unsettling marriage of his music with this digital horror aesthetic. The visuals for his Jennifer's Body music video also leaned into the VHS-style, grainy recordings that are staples of Analog Horror. Security cam footage and shaky handheld shots mirrored the quality of many infamous LiveLeak videos, drawing a deliberate line between the unsettling visuals of Carson's rollout and the raw brutality that defined LiveLeak's legacy. Even Carson's merchandise reflected this theme, embracing the bloody, gore-heavy imagery that dominated his album's aesthetic.

While some fans found Carson's fascination with gore and internet horror unsettling or even tasteless, the rollout for A Great Chaos was undeniably unique. The combination of early internet horror with his hip-hop sound created something that felt genuinely fresh within the genre. In a musical landscape where shock value is often diluted by repetition, Carson's approach was a bold and cohesive statement. The synergy between the album's sound and its visuals made it more than just a collection of songs—it was an experience that pulled listeners into its dark, chaotic world.

Whether or not Carson's LiveLeak-inspired direction stands the test of time, it's clear that he tapped into something both nostalgic and boundary-pushing. In embracing the unsettling legacy of internet horror, Carson fused his artistic vision with one of the darkest corners of digital culture. Time will tell how this aesthetic will evolve, but for now, A Great Chaos represents a provocative fusion of hip-hop and internet horror that pushes boundaries in both sound and imagery. ★

At Long Last,

DARK FEMININE

BY ZUZI

If only they knew she had the power.

In 2023, Doja Cat released "Attention," the lead single from her much-anticipated album Scarlet. The video shocked fans when, halfway through, Doja appeared naked and covered in blood. These brief, haunting scenes marked the debut of her alter ego, Scarlet, and fans immediately began to speculate about the meaning behind the imagery. Some, myself included, saw a striking resemblance to Stephen King's iconic character, Carrie White. If you think I'm reaching, let me explain.

In Carrie, a shy and bullied high school girl, Carrie White, is publicly humiliated when a bucket of pig's blood is poured on her at prom. This cruel act awakens her telekinetic powers, and in a fit of rage, she unleashes chaos, destroying everyone in her path. The once-timid girl transforms into a force of vengeance, her bloody figure burned into the minds of all who witness her wrath. The blood becomes a symbol of Carrie's transformation—from an outcast to a terrifying, empowered being. It's this visual and thematic transformation that echoes in Doja's Scarlet. Both women, pushed to their limits, emerged stronger, more dangerous, and completely unapologetic.

CARRIE

Before the release of Scarlet, Doja began making headlines for her radical transformation. In August 2022, she shaved her head and eyebrows during an Instagram Live, sparking rumors of a mental health crisis. Fans criticized her, calling her "unfuckable," to which Doja responded with fiery defiance, telling them to "Go fuck [themselves]." She leaned further into this rebellious energy, adopting edgier looks and getting tattoos that hinted at her new alter ego. In January 2023, her all-red Schiaparelli look at Paris Fashion Week was labeled "demonic" by some, and later that year, a tattoo of a mythological monster fueled conspiracy theories that she'd "sold her soul to the devil."

But Doja remained unfazed, telling her fans in February, "I enjoy playing with people's ignorance and stupidity for my own happiness and personal gain." The teasing continued with cryptic tweets like "scarlet was here" and "scarlet's watching," until she finally revealed Scarlet in the bloody visuals of "Attention." Fans were curious—what did this bloody persona mean?

Doja explained that Scarlet represented

DOJA CAT AS SCARLET

rebirth, "the reimagination of the self," and "the birth of a new creative thought." It makes sense—after all, when we are born, we are covered in blood. But the connection to Carrie runs deeper. Like Carrie, Doja had been humiliated by an audience, criticized for her appearance and her choices. And like Carrie, she took her power back. As the blood poured over both of them, they each transformed, shedding their former selves and embracing a more powerful, untouchable version.

On the poster for Carrie, the tagline reads, "If you've got a taste for terror... take Carrie to the prom." I imagine if Scarlet had a poster, it would say something similar—perhaps "try to put Doja in a box." But at the bottom of Carrie's poster is a phrase that would fit perfectly on Doja's: "If only they knew she had the power." Because, like Carrie, Doja's transformation is a warning: she won't be controlled, and those who try will face the consequences. ★

AALIYAH IS..QUEEN

OF THE DAMNED!

The legacy of Aaliyah's dark, final role.

BY ZUZI

I think everybody has a bit of a fascination with the dark side, and I myself have always loved the dark side as well," Aaliyah once said in an interview with ABC. The R&B star was reflecting on her role in Queen of the Damned, a film that would forever be tied to her legacy. Anne Rice, author of The Vampire Chronicles, redefined the vampire genre for a new generation with her seductive and dangerous bloodsuckers, starting with Interview with the Vampire in 1976. The film adaptation in 1994 was a huge success, so a follow-up was inevitable. However, instead of adapting The Vampire Lestat, Warner Brothers chose to combine elements from Rice's second and third books, ultimately focusing on Queen of the Damned. Rice was vocal in her disapproval, calling it "a bad idea… a doomed project." But was she right?

Queen of the Damned follows the legendary vampire Lestat (Stuart Townsend), who reinvents himself as a rock star in modern-day America. His music awakens Akasha (Aaliyah), the ancient and powerful queen of all vampires, who is determined to make Lestat her king. Akasha's malevolent power threatens the survival of the vampire race, forcing the immortals to unite against her. The film also explores a subplot with a young woman (Marguerite Moreau) who becomes infatuated with Lestat. Director Michael Rymer's decision to cast Aaliyah as Akasha was driven by his desire to portray the Egyptian queen as authentically as possible. "There were two factors for casting Aaliyah. I was very keen that Akasha, an Egyptian queen, not look like Elizabeth Taylor," Rymer told Vibe, referencing the iconic actress' role in Cleopatra. For Aaliyah, this film was supposed to mark her transition into acting, with future roles in The Matrix Reloaded and Sparkle awaiting her. Tragically, her life was cut short in a plane crash six months after filming, leaving Akasha as her final performance.

D espite high expectations, the film was a commercial and critical disaster. With a meager 17% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, it was criticized for its muddled plot and campy style, described as an "MTV-styled vampire movie with lots of eye candy and bad accents." Aaliyah, although billed as the star, didn't appear until after the 30-minute mark, leaving fans disappointed with her limited screen time. Anne Rice's prediction appeared to come true as the film veered too far from its source material. In the wake of the failure, Rice publicly declared that no more of her books would be adapted into films, seemingly closing the door on The Vampire Chronicles in Hollywood.

However, over time, Queen of the Damned has taken on a life of its own. The film has earned a camp cult classic status, with fans embracing its early 2000s vibe. While it failed as a serious continuation of Interview with the Vampire, its unique aesthetic and campy execution have given it a devoted following. Aaliyah, despite her limited role, easily steals the show as Akasha. Her magnetic screen presence and embodiment of the character exude the power Rice envisioned, making her performance one of the film's few highlights. It's a haunting reminder of what could have been in her blossoming acting career.

In hindsight, Queen of the Damned may not have lived up to the expectations of Rice or her fans, but its cult following and Aaliyah's unforgettable portrayal make it a fascinating piece of cinema. While the film may have been labeled "a doomed project," its legacy—especially as part of Aaliyah's own—remains far more complicated and enduring than Rice could have anticipated. ★

WELCOME TO THE

CREEPSHOW

5 music videos you have to watch this month (or else)

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**

1

2

3 A.M.

by Eminem (2009)

In "3 a.m.," Eminem raps from the perspective of a serial killer grappling with his sanity and recalling a series of brutal murders. Unafraid to bring this dark concept to life, Slim Shady stalks the eerie halls of Popsomp Hills Rehabilitation Center, violently slaughtering the staff in a frenzy of gore, blood, and severed limbs. As he escapes the clinic, Eminem's alter ego leaves a trail of helpless, bloody bodies behind, warning, "It's 3 a.m., and here I come, so you should probably run." The music video blurs the line between Eminem's good side and Slim Shady's evil persona.

YONKERS

by Tyler, The Creator (2011)

In this unsettling, self-directed video, Tyler raps in a stark black-and-white setting. He handles a cockroach, then eats it, later vomiting on the floor. The word "Kill" is scrawled on his hand, accompanied by an inverted cross. The video escalates as Tyler removes his shirt, realizes his nose is bleeding, and ultimately hangs himself, with the final shot showing only his feet as the video fades out. As disturbing as the visuals are, this video made me fall in love with Tyler.

3

DISTURBIA

by Rihanna (2009)

"Disturbia" begins in a dark torture chamber, where Rihanna, dressed in black with dark makeup and long nails, plays a haunting melody on a shadowy piano, staring intensely into the camera. Throughout the video, she remains imprisoned, struggling to escape. The unsettling imagery escalates as she's tied to a bed, surrounded by eerie figures, and performs a Thriller-inspired dance routine during the refrain. In a claustrophobic scene, tarantulas crawl over her body, and her limbs are grotesquely bound to the walls. During the bridge, Rihanna is trapped in a tiny room, bound and helpless, as darkness closes in. This was one of the first music videos that made me fall in love with the art form, and I never missed it when it came on TV.

4

XO TOUR LIF3

by Lil Uzi Vert (2017)

The video unfolds a chilling tale of a deadly murder, set against a backdrop of apocalyptic imagery and surreal visuals that delve deep into the artist's troubled mind. Directed by fashion designer Virgil Abloh, it was shot in the 10th district of Paris. The video became controversial when it was revealed that the Arabic subtitles were purely aesthetic, mirroring the lyrics rather than translating them. While Uzi may have intended to create an eerie atmosphere, the use of Arabic came off as insensitive. Despite this, the music video remains an underrated example of horror-inspired visuals.

5

DEMONS

by Doja Cat (2023)

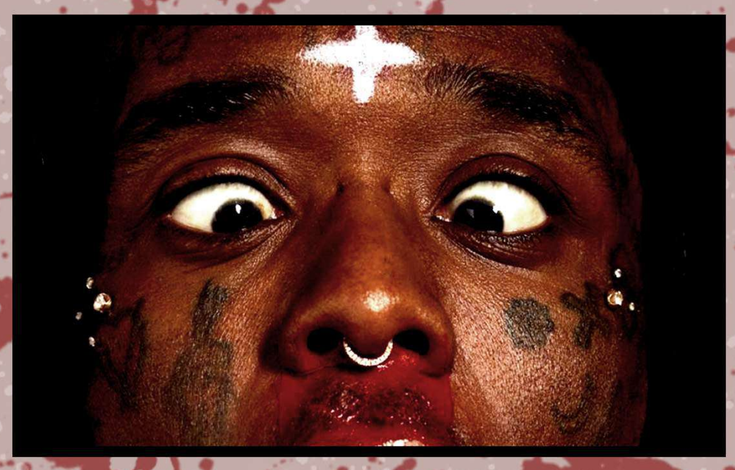
Doja terrifies the residents of a gothic suburban home with her full-body demon makeup and devilish horns. Co-directed by Doja and Christian Breslauer, the video pays homage to classic horror films like Poltergeist and The Shining, featuring scenes of Doja crawling upside down on the roof and causing chaos with a crew of ghouls. Actress Christina Ricci, known for her roles in gothic films, plays the "final girl," managing to escape with her family and knocking down the house's "For Sale" sign. The video is a miniature horror film, and one of the few music videos today that felt like a music video.

ETERNAL

Lil Uzi Vert's Twisted Inspiration Behind his what would become his Magnum Opus

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY ZUZI

In July 2018, Lil Uzi Vert tweeted, "Eternal means forever. Atake means 2 overtake," hinting at the title and themes of his next album, Eternal Atake. Known for pushing the boundaries of hip-hop with eerie, otherworldly aesthetics, Uzi's cryptic statement signaled the start of a new, bizarre era in his music. But it was the album's cover art—featuring a keyhole against a galactic backdrop—that really caught fans' attention. The imagery appeared to reference Heaven's Gate, the infamous cult that orchestrated a mass suicide in 1997. Uzi even changed his Instagram avatar to a photo of Marshall Applewhite, the cult's leader, signaling that this dark, tragic moment in history would play a central role in his album's theme.



Dead bodies covered up during the mass suicide, which would be referenced by Uzi though-out the era.

Heaven's Gate was founded in the 1970s by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles. Over time, their teachings evolved into a strange blend of Christian theology and extraterrestrial beliefs. After Nettles' death in 1985, Applewhite convinced his followers that the end was near and that they needed to escape their human bodies to survive. In 1997, as the Hale-Bopp comet approached, Applewhite claimed that a spaceship hiding behind the comet was ready to take them to a new life in space. On March 26th, 39 members of the cult were found dead in a California mansion, all dressed in matching black tracksuits and Nike sneakers. They had consumed poisoned applesauce and vodka in a coordinated mass suicide, believing they would ascend to a higher plane of existence.

For many, the haunting image of the Heaven's Gate members, lying lifeless under purple shrouds, left a chilling mark on modern history. But for Lil Uzi Vert, this dark chapter became a source of creative inspiration. Uzi viewed Heaven's Gate as a metaphor for his own cult-like fanbase. The original Eternal Atake cover artwork was an unmistakable homage to the cult's logo, though it sparked backlash from the remaining members. "He is using and adapting our copyrights and trademarks without our permission and the infringement will be taken up with our attorneys," a Heaven's Gate representative told Genius. Uzi eventually changed the artwork but continued to draw on the cult's imagery and ideology.

Leading up to the album's release, Uzi shared cryptic visuals that deepened the connection. One striking teaser featured four women dressed in purple cloaks, a clear nod to the purple shrouds placed over the bodies of Heaven's Gate members. The same women appeared in the official album trailer, in which Uzi, playing an office worker, is abducted by mysterious figures after receiving cryptic coordinates. In the final moments of the trailer, Uzi ascends into a UFO—mirroring the cult's belief that their souls would ascend to a spaceship waiting behind the Hale-Bopp comet.

Though unsettling, Uzi's fascination with Heaven's Gate added a unique layer to the Eternal Atake experience. As a teenager, I was drawn to the sheer oddity of the reference—it was unlike anything hip-hop had ever seen. While most rappers pull from familiar themes, Uzi ventured into the bizarre, embracing one of the darkest moments of cult history to create his magnum opus. The album went on to dominate the charts, leaving some to wonder just how far Uzi's "cult" would follow him into the unknown. ★

ATAKE

King of the Fanged

Playboi Carti's vampiric transformation drew inspiration directly from the iconic vampire genre, spreading the influence of two vampire classics across his entire cult-like following

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY ZUZI

When you write that shit, tell 'em I'm a vampire," Carti told Rolling Stone in 2019. At the time, he was teasing his much-anticipated second studio album Whole Lotta Red. That quote marked a turning point in Carti's career, revealing a fascination with vampires that would soon permeate his music, image, and influence. His girlfriend at the time even confirmed his obsession, saying, "He loves vampire movies, especially cult classics like The Lost Boys and Interview with the Vampire." These gothic films became the bedrock for Carti's vampiric persona, setting the stage for one of the most iconic aesthetic shifts in modern hip-hop.

It's no surprise the self-proclaimed "King Vamp" gravitates toward these two gothic horror classics. The Lost Boys(1987) is a quintessential vampire film, blending teenage rebellion with supernatural horror. The movie, set in the fictional town of Santa Carla, follows two brothers as they discover that the town is overrun with vampires. Its wild, campy energy and retro appeal are a perfect match for Carti's chaotic yet stylish vibe. Similarly, Interview with the Vampire (1994) explores darker, more philosophical vampire themes, following the tortured Louis and the hedonistic Lestat as they struggle with their undead existence. Carti has openly said he sees himself in these vampire characters, often citing their timeless beauty and invincibility as influences. "I get a lot of my inspiration from vampire movies because when you see a vampire, he always looks good," Carti revealed in a 2021 interview. "He don't age. He can't die. He's beautiful. That's what I was on."

As the release of Whole Lotta Red approached, Carti's vampiric transformation became undeniable. His fashion sense evolved, embracing a darker, more gothic aesthetic that blended punk and high fashion. Black-on-black outfits became his signature, with pieces from designers like Rick Owens paired with black nail polish, cross earrings, and tightly twisted red hair. His fanbase, aptly named "vamps," quickly adopted the same look, paying homage to their vampiric leader. This era also saw the rise of Carti's OPIUM collective, whose use of upside-down crosses and dark imagery further solidified the vampire lifestyle as Carti's trademark. The album's artwork itself paid tribute to 70s punk magazine Slash, specifically referencing David Vanian of The Damned, a gothic punk icon who, like Carti, embodied the vampiric aesthetic.

Whole Lotta Red fully immersed fans in this vampiric world, with tracks like "King Vamp" and "Vamp Anthem" solidifying Carti's new identity. "I'm a dark knight, bitch, yeah, I can't sleep," he declares on "King Vamp," referencing the common trope of vampires being nocturnal creatures. On "Vamp Anthem," Carti takes it a step further by flipping Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, a composition synonymous with gothic horror films, into a haunting anthem for his fanbase. The album creates an eerie, atmospheric soundscape that reflects Carti's obsession with the vampire lifestyle—immortal, nocturnal, and forever mysterious. His fans, now vamps themselves, embraced the dark allure, making Whole Lotta Red a defining moment not only for Carti but for the culture he cultivated.

Despite moving beyond the Whole Lotta Red era, Carti's vampiric influence remains ever-present. In 2024, he continues to embody his "King Vamp" persona, influencing fans to throw up the "YVL" hand sign, standing for "Young Vamp Life," a playful nod to Young Thug's "Young Stoner Life." Rumors of Carti spending months in a cave working on new music only further his commitment to the vampire mystique. While his sound and aesthetic may evolve, one thing is certain: Carti's fascination with vampires is far from a passing phase. As he once said, "Vampires live forever," and so too will Carti's gothic legacy. ★

Jason: Behind the MASK

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**

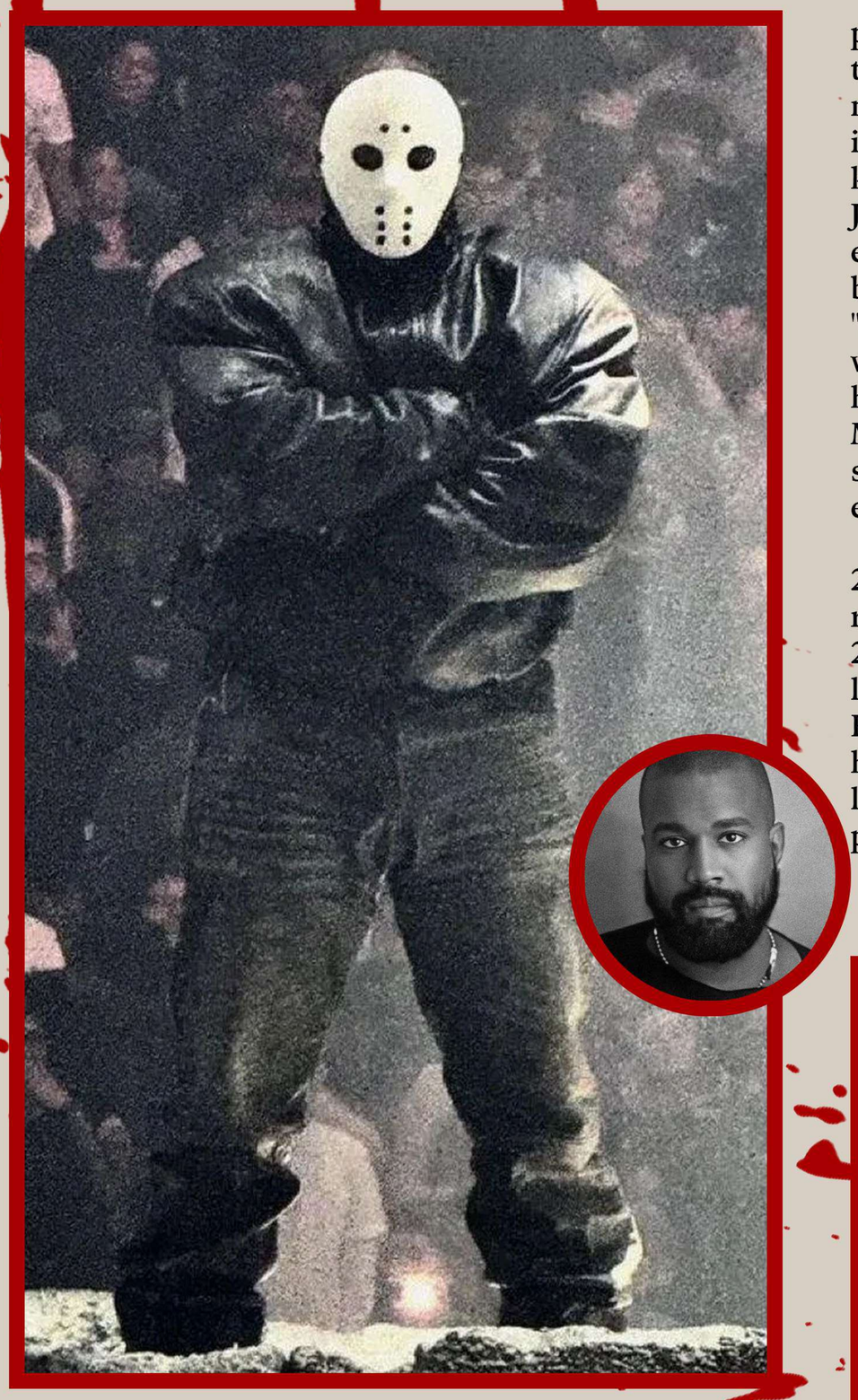
How a hockey mask became one of the most iconic symbols in horror and found its way into hip-hop

Eminem & many rap stars sporting the Jason Mask.

Friday the 13th* introduced audiences to Jason Voorhees, a relentless and silent killer who would come to reshape the slasher genre. While Jason's presence was already terrifying from the moment he entered the scene, it wasn't until he donned the now-iconic hockey mask that his image was truly cemented in pop culture. This mask has since become one of the most recognizable symbols in horror, representing the fear and suspense Jason brought to the screen for decades.

Jason's infamous hockey mask didn't make its first appearance until *Friday the 13th: Part III*. Prior to that, Jason wore a burlap sack to hide his deformed face—a face that was the result of hydrocephalus and other mental disabilities. His brutal backstory included a traumatic childhood filled with bullying and the death of his mother at the hands of reckless teenagers. The hockey mask, however, was introduced by mere coincidence. Martin Jay Sadoff, the 3D effects supervisor for *Part III* and an avid hockey fan, had a Detroit Red Wings goalie mask on set. When a lighting test was needed for Jason, Sadoff offered the mask, which director Steve Miner loved. The rest is cinematic history. The mask has become Jason's defining feature and left an indelible mark on horror.

While each slasher icon has a signature look—Michael Myers with his eerie white mask and Freddy Krueger with his bladed glove—Jason's hockey mask became the slasher trademark that transcended the genre. The mask not only added to his menacing



persona but also embedded itself in pop culture to the point where it began to inspire other forms of media. In the world of hip-hop, for example, Jason's influence has been especially prominent. Eminem, known for his horrorcore lyrics, leaned heavily into Jason's imagery during his *Marshall Mathers LP* era. He rapped, "If it's not a rapper I make it as, I'ma be a fuckin' rapist in a Jason mask" on his 2000 track "Criminal." During his 2001 tour, Eminem sported a white hockey mask and overalls, a look that paid homage to both Jason and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*'s Leatherface. This outfit became synonymous with Slim Shady, Eminem's darker alter ego.

Jason's mask has continued to appear in hip-hop. 21 Savage, known for his love of horror movies, referenced Jason in his music and aesthetics. On his 2017 track "My Choppa Hates Niggas," he raps, "Feel like Jason, Friday 13th, Hockey mask with the .223." He even wore a Jason-inspired mask on the cover of his 2015 mixtape *Slaughter King*. 21 Savage, much like Eminem, has also embraced the mask in live performances, a symbol of his own dark and

menacing persona. Even Kanye West adopted the Jason mask during his *Vultures* era. For the first volume of the *Vultures* album, Kanye sported a white hockey mask similar to Jason's, later switching to a black version. Fans speculated that Kanye's use of the mask symbolized his resilience and defiance, much like Jason's unrelenting drive for revenge. Actor Kane Hodder, who played Jason in several *Friday the 13th* films, even commented on Kanye's mask, offering to loan him a better-quality version and suggesting, "When you're wearing the mask, do the big eyes."

Jason Voorhees and his iconic mask have become much more than just a staple of the *Friday the 13th* series—they've become cultural symbols, influencing artists far beyond the world of horror. The mask's impact on hip-hop proves its lasting power as a symbol of fear, strength, and revenge. As long as artists continue to channel that energy, Jason will never die. ★

EVOLUTION

1980

1981

1984

2001

2009

THE STORY OF MICHAEL JACKSON'S THRILLER

How Michael Jackson's horror-themed masterpiece changed the music industry forever.

Written & Designed by **ZUZI**

By 1983, Michael Jackson's sixth studio album Thriller had already achieved massive success. With six of its nine tracks released as singles and two hit videos for "Billie Jean" and "Beat It," label executives at Epic Records assumed the album had peaked. They saw no reason to invest in a third video, especially for a song they dismissed as a novelty horror track. But Michael Jackson, determined to break new ground, had other plans.

In London that year, director John Landis received an unexpected call from Jackson. After watching Landis' film An American Werewolf in London, Jackson knew he wanted him to direct Thriller. Landis agreed on one condition: the video would be a short film. Michael, always looking to push creative boundaries, was thrilled with the idea.

Unfortunately, his label wasn't. Walter Yetnikoff of CBS Records bluntly stated, "Who wants a single about monsters?" The idea of pouring more money into a horror-themed video seemed pointless to them.

Despite the label's reluctance, Jackson found a way to fund the project. He and Landis struck a deal with MTV and Showtime, who each contributed $250,000 for the rights to air The Making of Thriller, a groundbreaking behind-the-scenes documentary. This financial backing allowed them to push forward with a $500,000 budget—making Thriller the most expensive music video ever made at the time.

The storyline for the video was written by Landis, inspired by the song's spooky narrative. Jackson, who admitted, "I never was a horror fan... I was too scared," was careful to maintain a creepy-comical tone. The plot centered around Jackson on a date, transforming into a werewolf and later, a zombie, leading the now-iconic cemetery dance sequence. Collaborating with choreographer Michael Peters, Jackson created a routine that would become etched in pop culture forever. The video ends with Jackson's girlfriend waking up, realizing it was all just a nightmare—an ending that cleverly balanced fear with fun.

Beyond its entertaining plot, Thriller pulled from horror's cinematic history in ways that few music videos had ever done before. From Jackson's werewolf transformation inspired by classic horror to the sinister Vincent Price voiceover that added a touch of terrifying authenticity, the video paid homage to the genre while keeping it accessible to a mainstream audience. The use of elaborate practical effects, a hallmark of horror films, helped elevate Thriller to more than just a video—it was an event. It scared, thrilled, and, most importantly, captivated audiences.

Thriller didn't just change the music video game—it changed the music industry. As British director Brian Grant put it, "The big turning point was Thriller." It solidified MTV's cultural dominance, shattered racial barriers for Black artists, and brought cinematic production values to music videos. The

A terrifying Zombie Michael

Michael in the iconic dance scenes.

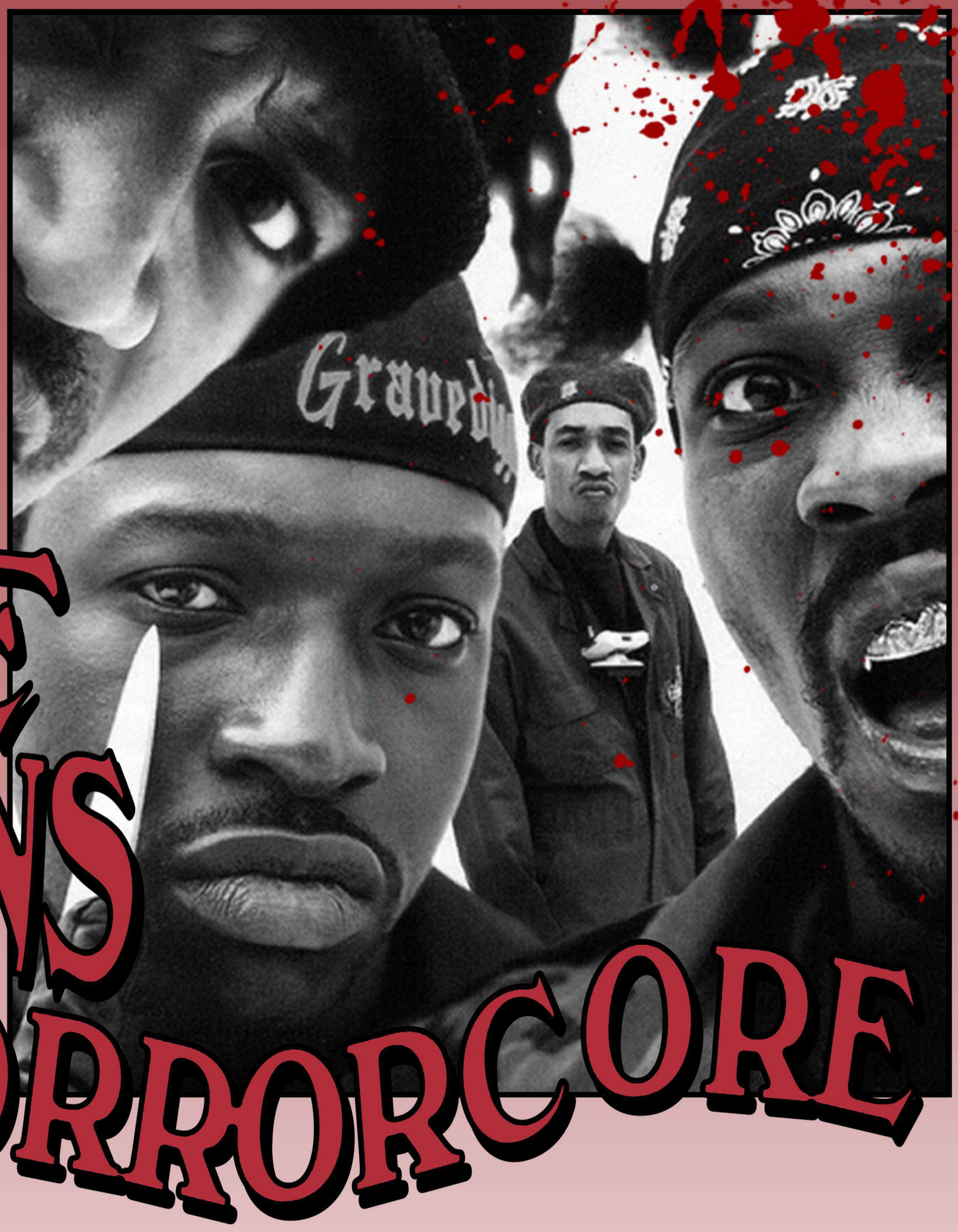
Michael transforming into a werewolf.

"I WAS NEVER A HORROR FAN... I WAS TOO SCARED..."

"zombie dance," Jackson's red jacket, and the video's innovative mix of horror and music set a standard that continues to inspire artists today. The video became more than just a promotional tool for a song; it was a cultural phenomenon that redefined what a music video could be.

From its impact on the visual storytelling of music videos to its role in breaking boundaries for Black artists, Thriller remains the greatest music video of all time—an eerie masterpiece that will continue to haunt and inspire generations to come. What started as a novelty track turned into a horror-infused cultural revolution that fused the power of music and the terror of the supernatural, forever elevating the art of the music video. ★

THE ORIGINS OF HORRORCORE



Tracing the Origins of Hip-Hop's Dark Side

BY ZUZI

Horrorcore stands as one of the most misunderstood subgenres in hip-hop. With its blend of macabre themes—murder, gore, and the occult—it's easy for listeners to dismiss it as mere shock value or even outright offense. Many people perceive it as edgy for the sake of being edgy, pushing boundaries too far. Some listeners find the disturbing lyrical content corny, while others are genuinely repelled by the violent imagery. Yet beneath the blood-soaked surface lies a deep-rooted, impactful movement within hip-hop.

Horrorcore's origins trace back to the early '90s, with the Houston-based group Geto Boys laying its foundation. Their 1991 single "Mind Playing Tricks on Me" introduced a darker, more paranoid side to hip-hop, delving into themes of mental illness and urban anxiety. But it was the Gravediggaz who truly defined horrorcore. Formed in 1992, this supergroup—helmed by producer Prince Paul and RZA of Wu-Tang fame—released 6 Feet Deep in 1994, a landmark album that introduced horrorcore to the masses. The eerie production, violent narratives, and horror-movie references painted a terrifying, vivid world. Their single "Diary of a Madman" featured RZA's brutal lyrics: "I chewed my fuckin' arm off and made an escape." Despite its intensity, the Gravediggaz weren't just shock merchants. According to Prince Paul, the lyrics reflected internal struggles and the horrors of reality, like comparing crackheads to zombies.

In Memphis, Three 6 Mafia was crafting their own version of horrorcore with Mystic Stylez, a menacing blend of horror-inspired lyrics and lo-fi beats. Their influence on the genre was significant, bringing Southern grit and Satanic themes to the forefront of the underground. Three 6 Mafia, along with artists like Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, pushed horrorcore's aesthetic further, intertwining it with the hardcore, occult-tinged rap that began to take shape in the mid-'90s. Despite its brief mainstream presence, horrorcore started to slip into the shadows, regarded as a niche genre for those who could stomach its dark content.

However, the genre didn't die quietly. In 1999, Eminem burst onto the scene, channeling the horrorcore ethos with his Slim Shady LP. Tracks like "97' Bonnie & Clyde" and "Kim" echoed the murder fantasies and graphic violence that horrorcore was known for. Eminem's success brought a resurgence to the genre, but the momentum couldn't last. By the mid-2000s, horrorcore largely faded from the mainstream. However, its spirit lived on through artists like Tyler, the Creator. Tyler's early music, particularly on Bastard and Goblin, plunged headfirst into deeply unsettling territory. The lyrics were raw and disturbing, covering themes of murder, rape, suicide, and mental instability. Songs like "Yonkers" and "Satrah" leaned heavily into shock value, with Tyler rapping about violent fantasies and nihilistic tendencies over dark, minimalist beats. Tyler's early work echoed the psychological horror that defined the genre, twisting personal pain into something both terrifying and grotesque. Despite this, Tyler always maintained a self-awareness about the genre, treating it as a phase of exploration rather than a permanent identity. By the time 2013 came around, Tyler had begun distancing himself from horrorcore's darkness, opting instead fo a more introspective sound that reflected the actual Tyler.

While horrorcore no longer holds a prominent place in mainstream hip-hop, its echoes remain. The eerie, unsettling production and themes can still be felt in artists across different genres. Despite its critics, horrorcore has left an indelible mark on the culture, a reminder that sometimes the darkest corners of music are the most influential, even when they lurk in the shadows. ★

GUESS THE BAR...

Match the horror bar to the emcee!

a *"My bitch brown like Hennessy, bitch*
Big blood like **Freddy** *in dreams, bitch"*

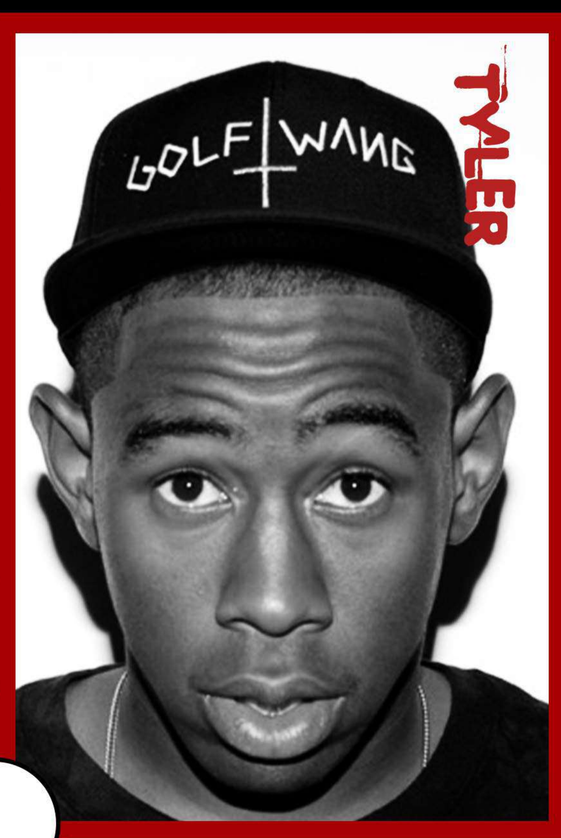
b *"***Jennifer's Body***, my bitch is a hottie, my bitch is a boy eater"*

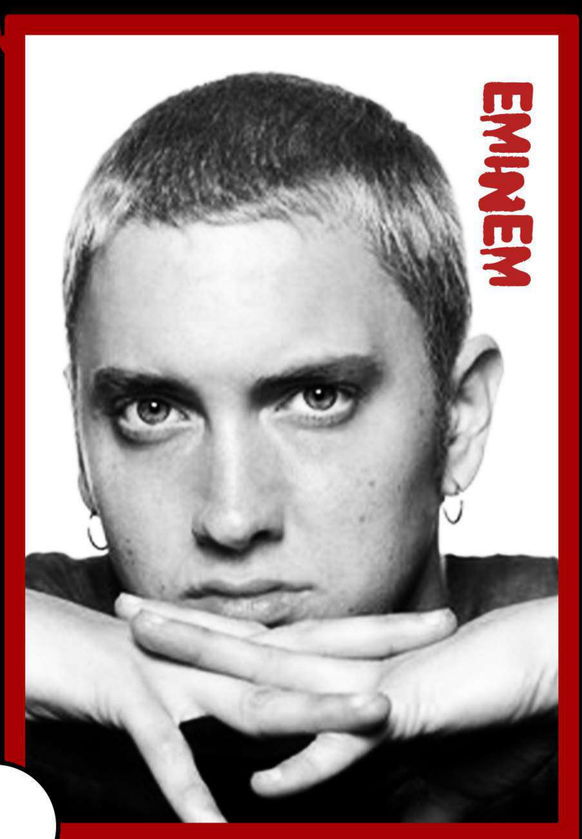
c ***"So, say my name like* Candyman */ and I'ma come and fix you up like the handyman"***

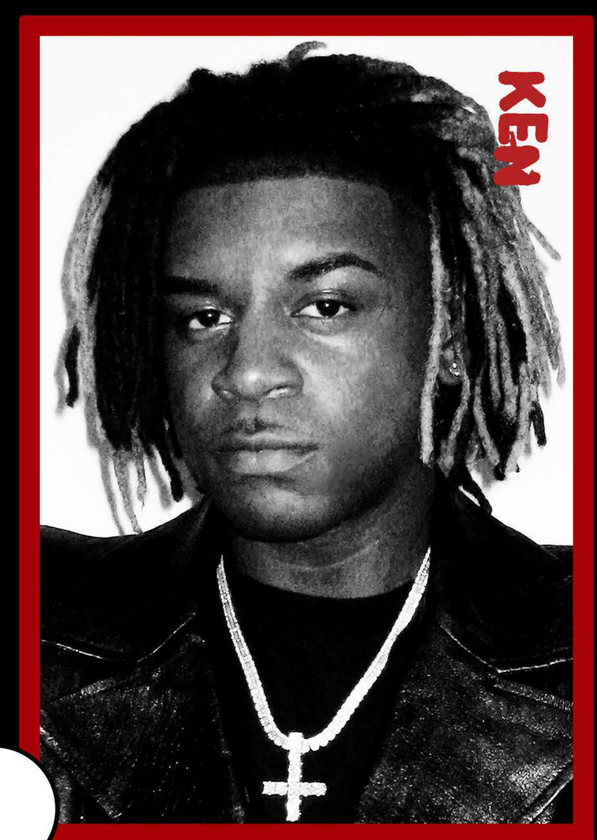
d *"It's goin' down, basement / Friday the 13th, guess who's playing* **Jason** */ Tuck yourself in, you better hold onto your teddy / It's* **Nightmare on Elm Street** *and guess who's playin'* **Freddy****?"**

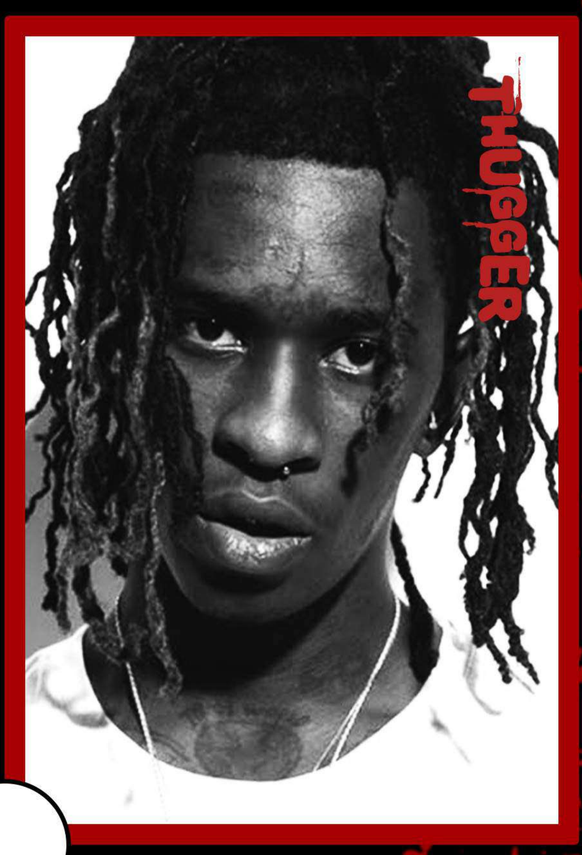
e ***"The favorite nigger turned into Freddy Kruger / And this that raw shit, dead bodies chopped up in the sewer"***

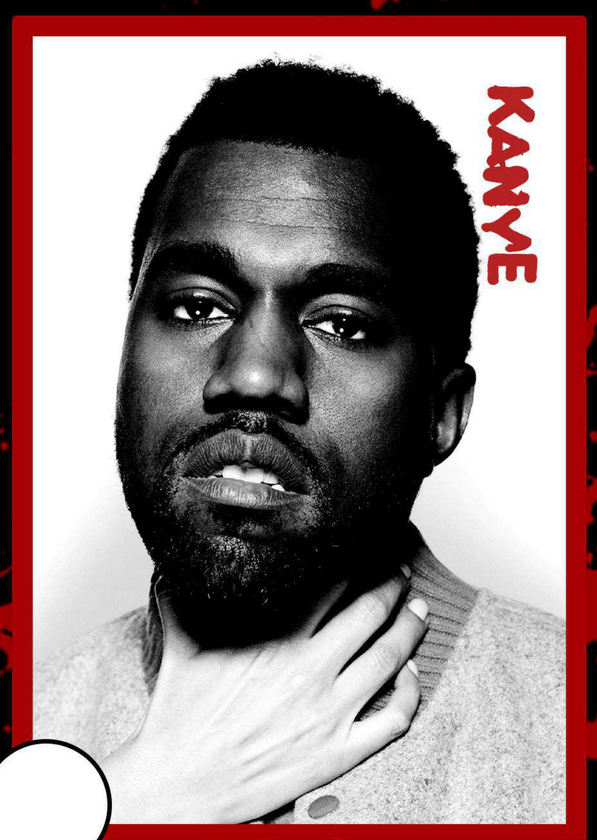
f ***"And if it's not a rapper that I make it as / I'ma be a fuckin' rapist in a* Jason *mask"***











Answers: Tyler: E; Nicki: D; Eminem: F; Ken: B; Thugger: A; Kanye: C

EXIT TICKET

WRITTEN & DESIGNED BY ZUZI

6 films you should watch after reading this

AMERICAN PSYCHO

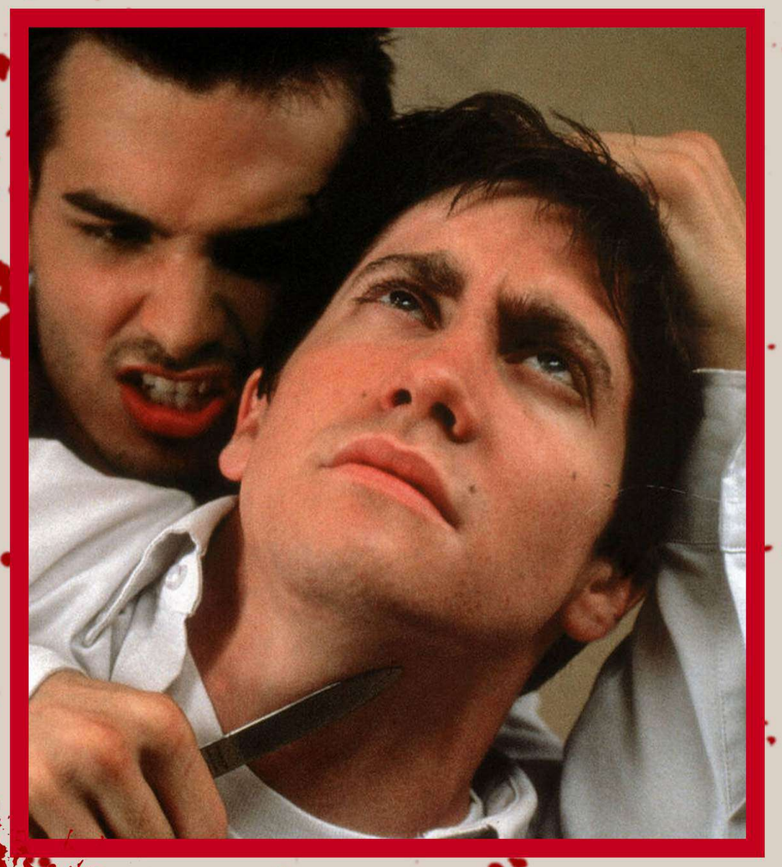
A slick, satirical look at the excess of the '80s, American Psycho follows Patrick Bateman, a wealthy New York banker with a terrifying secret. What starts as a simple thriller quickly spirals into a confusing blend of reality and madness—so much so, I couldn't help but love the mind-bending journey. Is Bateman a monster, or is it all in his head? That's for you to decide.

Year of Release: 2000
Length: 1hr 44m

CARRIE

Stephen King's Carrie delivers a chilling tale of high school torment and supernatural revenge. Watching Carrie White's journey from bullied outcast to something much darker gave me chills—no one can forget that prom scene. Often credited with reviving the horror genre in the '70s, it's a must-watch for any fan of psychological terror.

Year of Release: 1976
Length: 1hr 38m



DONNIE DARKO

Donnie Darko isn't your typical horror movie—it's a mind-bending dive into time travel, existential dread, and teenage rebellion. Every time I rewatch it, I uncover something new, making me fall in love with it even more. The surreal and eerie atmosphere will leave you questioning everything long after the credits roll.

Year of Release: 2001
Length: 1hr 53m

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

Nightmare on Elm Street introduced the world to Freddy Krueger, a villain who haunts your dreams—literally. It's the quintessential slasher that set the standard for horror, blending fear and fantasy in a way no film had done before. My personal favorite horror film.

Year of Release: 1984
Length: 1hr 38m

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

A homoerotic vampire film with stunning visuals and an unforgettable cast, Interview with the Vampire is more than just bloodsucking—it's a gothic masterpiece. With themes of eternal life, loneliness, and seduction, it's hard to look away. Reccomended if you're craving something dark and romantic.

Year of Release: 1994
Length: 2hr 3m

EVIL DEAD II

Evil Dead 2 is a wild ride—equal parts terrifying and absurd, with violence that's as over-the-top as it is inventive. The horror is real, but the film never takes itself too seriously, making it an unforgettable watch. If you're in the mood for gore, genuine scares, and a touch of insanity, this one's for you.

Year of Release: 1987
Length: 1hr 25m

The 27 Club

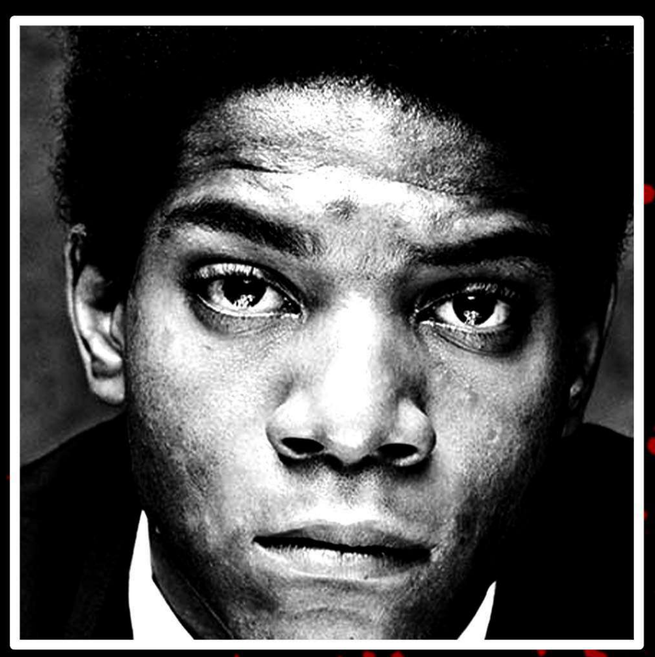
a tragic reminder of the brilliance and early deaths of iconic stars, haunting pop culture with the fragile nature of genius.

Amy Whinehouse

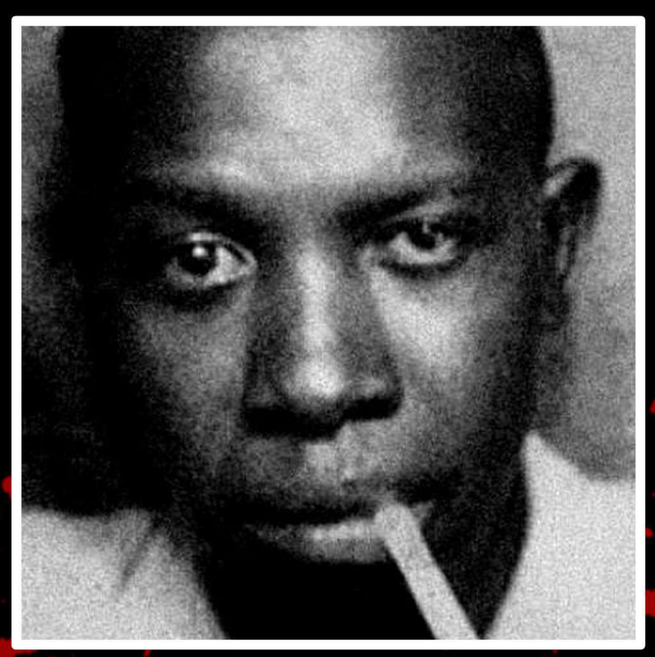
Kurt Cobain

Jimi Hendrix

Jim Morrison



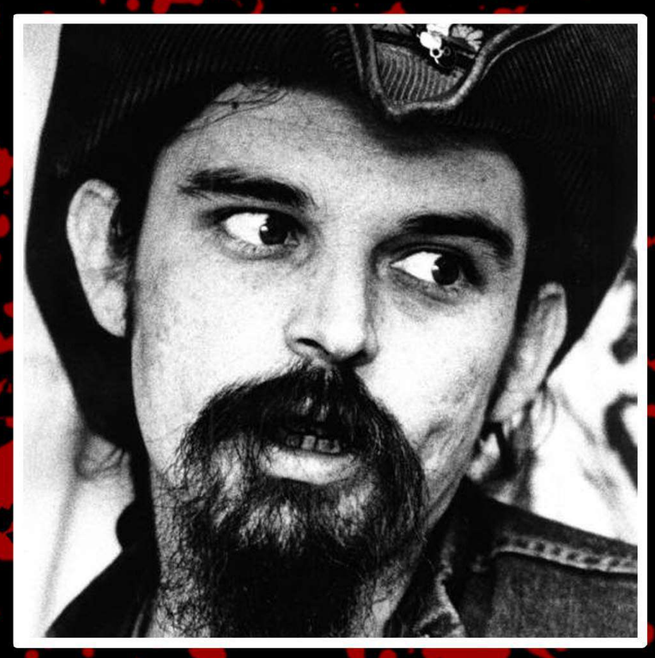
Jean-Michel Basquiat



Robert Johnson

Brian Jones

Janis Joplin



Ronald McKernan